

## Appendix 2

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### Widening Perception and the Viability of Developing Show Caves

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While most other cultures emphasized the religious importance of caves, the Western world underwent two significant changes in attitudes toward caves that ultimately expanded the reasons why people visit them. This made the development of Oregon Caves viable, irrespective of low population density in the surrounding area.

Caves retained their pre-classical importance to art and religion in ancient Greece and Rome. As with many other cultures of the time, the pre-Christian Romans believed that all humans originated from caves. This was expressed in their festival of Lupercalia on February 15 at the shallow cave called *Lupercal* on the Palatine Hill, where the legendary founders of Rome, the twins Romulus and Remus, were said to have been nursed by a wolf.

The Persian concept of absolute good and evil was introduced into Greece and among Judaic Essenes shortly prior to the Common Era (otherwise known as *Anno Domini*, or A.D.) A large part of its success and spread was because this dualism helped justify social stratification by the promise of a glorious afterlife. More egalitarian cultures believed in a democratic and balanced transactional reciprocity with the spirit, social, and natural worlds, one in

which one's actions or non-actions could yield benefit or harm. By contrast, relationships under the concept of good and evil were more one-sided, with priests and kings dominating and controlling those lower down on the social hierarchy, lest they too turn to evil. One cannot be egalitarian or tolerant if one side is evil or prone to evil and the other side is good.

Since there could not be two opposite places for absolute evil or absolute good, this dualistic concept created a singular focus on divine order and paradise at high elevations and thus ultimately devalued the religious importance of the middle world of humans and the lower world of caves. That the heavens were chosen rather than caves or even mountains likely had something to do with access, in that they required help from priest-kings. The choice also had to do with their seemingly unchanging, orderly, and hence perfect state; the importance of astronomical events in the seasonal calendar of agriculture; but the heavens also being a place where priests, kings, and gods could make sure everybody was behaving themselves. Sanctuaries on peaks in Crete overshadowed the earlier cave shrines but subsequently declined in use as the locus of divinity and paradise was placed beyond Earth. The Roman philosopher Seneca, for example, told of some Greek miners who visited a cave where they saw huge rushing rivers and vast still lakes, spectacles that made them shake with horror. The land hung above their heads and the winds made a hollow whistle in the shadows, while in the depths, the rivers led nowhere but into the perpetual and alien night. Once they returned topside, the miners "lived in fear, for having tempted the fires of Hell."<sup>1</sup>

By late Roman times most caves were increasingly viewed in a negative light, in part due to being most distant from the sky gods, but also because caves were not perceived as materially useful. Heroes like Hercules and Aeneas did not go to caves for their enlightenment, but because caves accessed the land of the dead. Only the profit motive could induce anyone less than a hero to embark on such a journey.

The belief pervading the western world that caves represented sacred space continued to ebb by the third century. They were then seen as inhabited by demons, ghosts, witches, beasts, and savages believed to have false religions or none at all. In part because

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<sup>1</sup> Donald Dale Jackson, *Underground Worlds* (Alexandria, Virginia: Time-Life Books, 1985), 27.



FIGURE 82. A view of Virgil's Grove at The Leasowes landscape garden (England), 1748.

the new religions of the western and Islamic worlds began in cities and large towns, the wild or rural landscapes in general were not as esteemed as they had once had been. People of the countryside became known as the *pagani* ("pagan") in Italy or "heathen," if they dwelled amid the heather in moors located north of Hadrian's Wall on the island of Great Britain. If heaven in the prevailing Judeo-Christian perception could be seen as an escape from the misery and evil associated with earthly existence, then nature could be beautiful or even sacred only if sanctified by recognized saints. If depicted at all, caves were usually seen as entry points to hell or part of hell itself.

During the Renaissance, attitudes of the classical world were reclaimed but also were selectively modified to suit new tastes during the Renaissance. Most religious associations with both natural and human places declined, thus aiding in the rise of capitalism and science as well as the rebirth of democracy. Political power went from church authorities to a rising mercantile class that pursued its search for wealth on heretofore uncharted seas and newly discovered lands.

Accompanying this shift was a change in the location of Eden, this time from the heavens to a middle world of the future. The slow rise of technology aided by science made the flatter natural areas more profitable, as these tracts could be measured and then transformed into fertile farmlands once again emblematic of Eden. Even some rugged places not suitable for mining or other extrac-

tion like timber could be perceived as interesting for the purposes of art, and in time, science and recreation. This re-conceptualizing of heaven produced focal points like water, outcrops, groves, and grottos in Renaissance gardens—at a time when the rich and powerful wanted to recall (however selectively) the classical past. Nevertheless, deep caves continued to be cast in a negative light.

The eighteenth century Enlightenment included both the enshrinement of rational thinking (hence the birth of geology and an acceleration in scientific achievements) over superstition, and a revolution in aesthetics called Romanticism. Not only did the Romantics expand the Renaissance vision of a manicured, but earthly, Eden to include even the wildest places, they also expressed an impulse to turn landscape into art. Romantics were able to accommodate a great range of sea- and landscapes within their aesthetic of the “sublime,” where both dread and delight, as well as melancholy, attracted artistic interest. Edenic landscapes also possessed great size, age, and mystery. One eighteenth century writer expressed the widely-held view where

“Even the rude rocks, the mossy caverns, the irregular unwrought grottos, and broken falls of waters, with all the horrid graces of wilderness itself, as representing Nature more, will be the more engaging, and appear with a magnificence beyond the formal mockery of princely gardens.”<sup>2</sup>

Most Romantics were also democrats who felt that such natural “gardens” should be open to everyone, rather than just the elite. Caves and other representations of “wilderness” could now be seen in a positive light, as suitable subjects for painting and even literature.

The Romantic view of caves as part of the sublime helped to contrast those rigid and orderly gardens of the ruling classes, as well as their castles or other great monuments in the Old World, with the bigger and even older “gardens” and natural “monuments” of the New World. This contrast aided the efforts of those who advocated that public parks be established that fit the mold of how Romantics viewed their gardens and a cultural construction

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<sup>2</sup> Anthony Ashley Cooper, Third Earl of Shaftesbury, *Characteristics of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times*, reprint of 1711 edition (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 2001), 220.

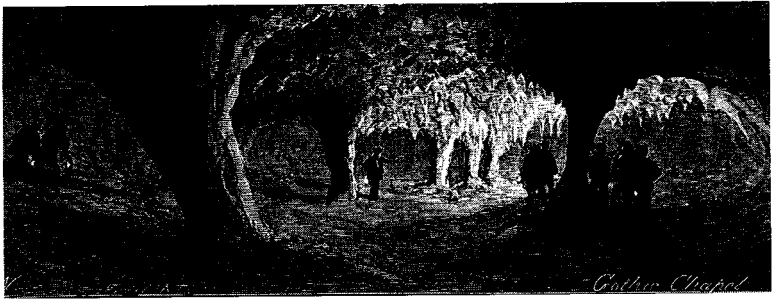


FIGURE 80. The “Gothic Chapel,” a vignette from “Scenes in Mammoth Cave,” part of *Picturesque America, II*, 1874.

called the sublime. Park areas in the United States were thus increasingly seen as symbolic of a new aesthetic, but also of a new democracy in a new nation.

Promoters of the Oregon Caves realized very early that the tour route had to conform to expectations attached to an Edenic landscape, one where getting around presented a challenge but visitors were compensated for their efforts by experiencing rooms of various sizes and seeing an ever-changing array of formations. Enlarged passages with curving trails resulted, ones similar in form to European carriage roads where visitors could walk upright or sit in relative comfort in carriages. Once the tunnels and electrical systems were in place, people on the tour did not have to carry their own light or backtrack and go against the flow of incoming tours.

What made possible and guided the development of Oregon Caves centered on a cave that could be profitable if there was even more of an Edenic garden both above and below. All this was possible because, by the early twentieth century, there had been a great increase in leisure time. The reasons people visited caves had also expanded beyond the religious, to rationale such as curiosity, recreation, exercise, nationalism, beauty, sublimity, sport, and science. The multiplicity of reasons and funding from government sources to increase the ease of access to Oregon Caves eventually brought a sufficient number of paying customers.

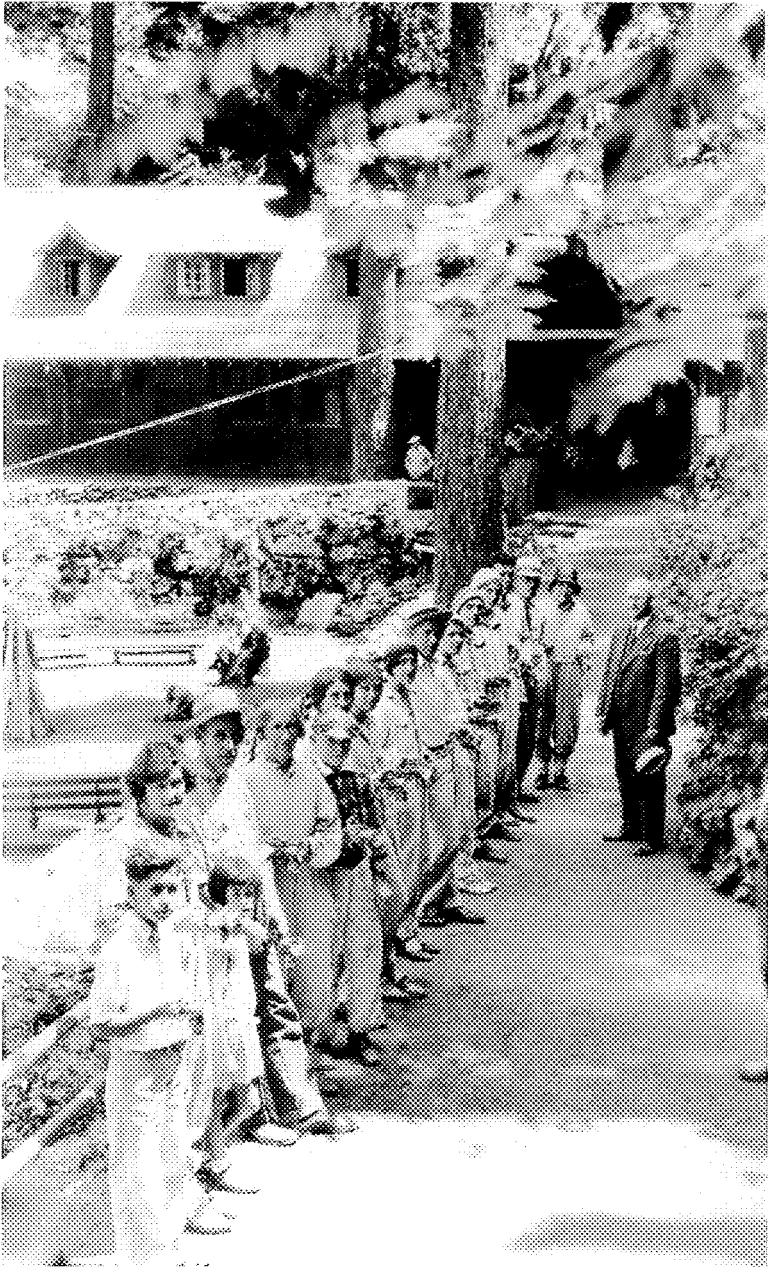
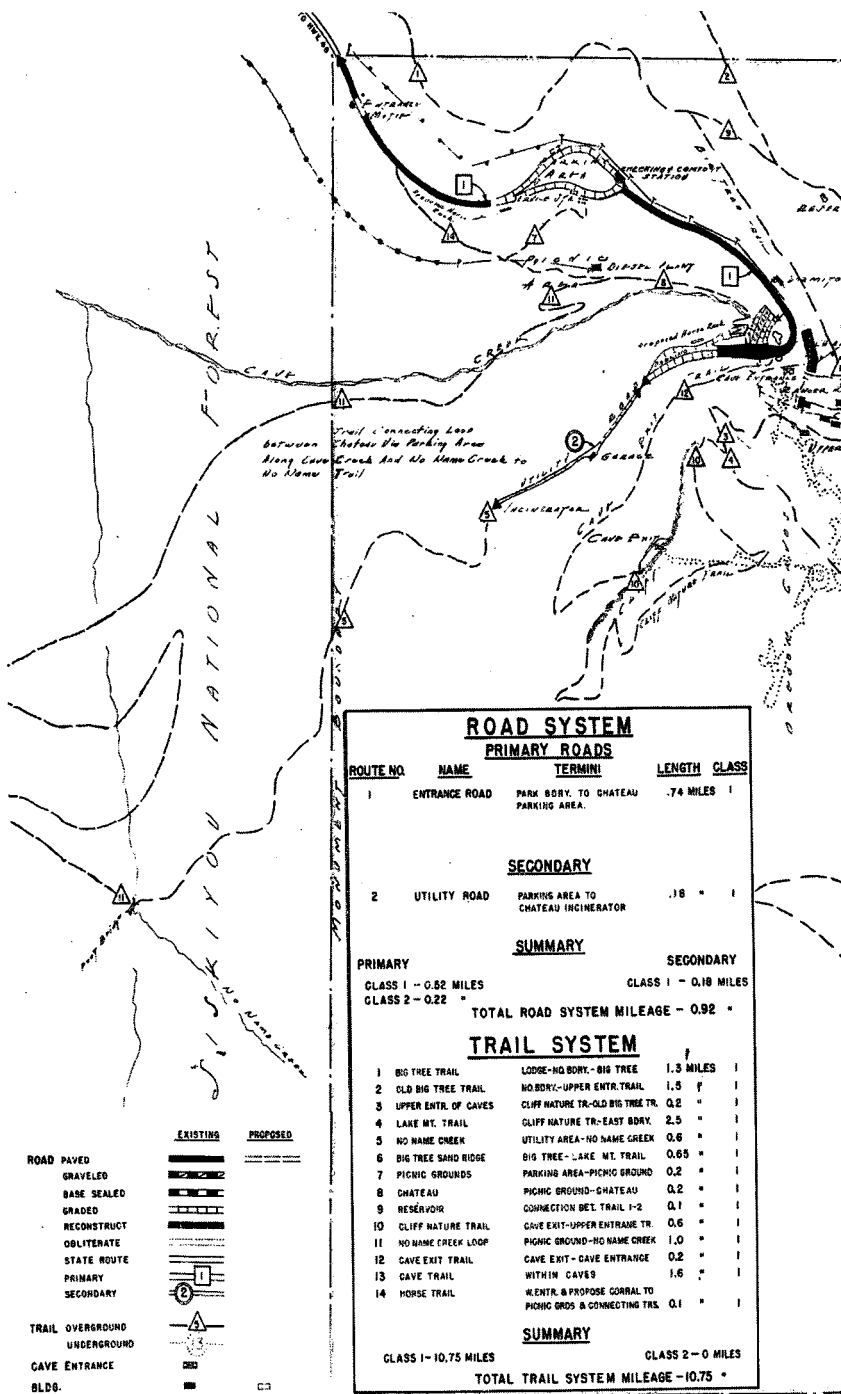
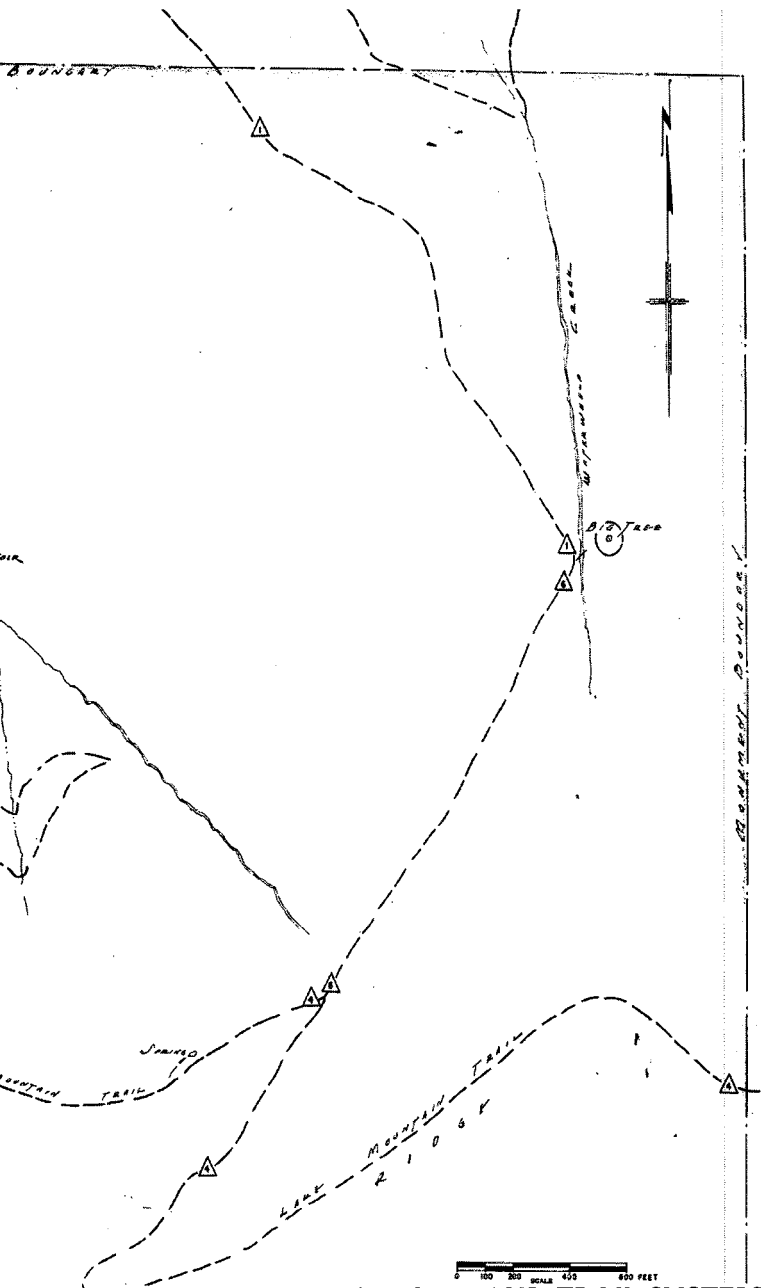


FIGURE 81. "Adventurous guests outfitted in special pajamas to protect from precipitaion and cold being welcomed by Geroge Sabin, General Manager," (Photo by Earl Dibble, 1930, OCNM Museum and Archives Collections.)





**APPENDIX 3. ROAD AND TRAIL SYSTEM**  
**OREGON CAVES NATIONAL MONUMENT**  
BASE MAP BY FRANCIS G. LANGE, 1942. UPDATED OVERLAY, 1952